

CANADIAN CHURCH NEWS NOTES

The following is the newest installment of the CANADA CHURCH NEWS NOTES, designed especially for those interested in religious news pertaining to Canada. It is written by Vince Londini (vlondini@bethelbaptist.ca), Bethel Baptist Church, London, Ontario, and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service (FBIS). For instructions on how to unsubscribe to the FBIS or to change mailing addresses, please consult the information paragraph at the end.

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CATHOLIC LAWMAKERS VS. VATICAN PRONOUNCEMENT

The Vatican recently issued instructions to Catholic lawmakers entitled, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons." The timing of this release seems to be an attempt by the Catholic Church to influence Canadian Catholic politicians, currently embroiled in the well-publicized same-sex marriage debate. The document resides online at www.catholic.org.

Many of Canada's top leaders claim Catholicism, as does 43% of the population. But many powerful Catholics have no intention of following the Vatican's pronouncement. Catholic lawmakers such as Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Justice Minister Martin Cauchon, and candidate for Prime Minister Paul Martin publicly proclaim their support (or lack of opposition) toward same-sex marriages.

Canadian Alliance MP Jason Kenny, a Catholic who will oppose same-sex marriages, felt that the Vatican's directives restate the obvious. "Politicians who come from the Catholic tradition whose convictions are formed in part by their faith, this should be nothing new to them and they should already have taken that into consideration" (*Ottawa Citizen*).

Raising specters of the Inquisition, R.C. Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary warned that Prime Minister Chrétien is "putting at risk his eternal salvation. I pray for the Prime Minister because I think his eternal salvation is in jeopardy. He is making a morally grave error and he's not being accountable to God" (*CBC*). A *Toronto Star* reports Canadian Council of Bishops general secretary Peter Schonenbach's criticism of Henry, "It's not the sort of language that the rest of the bishops would employ. My own stance on this and the stance of the bishops is that judgment is basically in God's hands and not in ours."

The *Toronto Star* article went on to say, "A spokesperson for Chrétien said the Prime Minister's primary responsibility is to the Canadian public, not his religious faith, and stressed that there must be a separation between the church and state."

CBC North interviewed Yukon MP, Larry Bagnell, reaching this conclusion, "Bagnell believes most Yukoners want to live their lives with as little interference from government as possible. He says he'll likely vote in favor of same-sex marriages as long as the law doesn't force churches to perform them." Bagnell said, "I want to support something that will not force religions to follow any particular edict."

Here rests the political reaction to the Vatican's pronouncement. May our response be proactive, laboring in prayer, "for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). For, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Proverbs 21:1).

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